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BERLIN CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS - IX

Soviet plan for European security: Foreign Minister Molotov's plan for European security climaxes a Soviet diplomatic campaign of several months designed to prove that European security is a matter for the Europeans to achieve without American interference. The Soviet Union has often suggested that the existing Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet treaties formed a good basis for such a security plan. But in presenting this new multilateral plan, Molotov belittled these treaties on the grounds that Britain and France were both engaged in remilitarizing Germany and consolidating NATO. He said that references to the present force or possible extension of these bilateral treaties are "incomprehensible to the people in the USSR".

The new plan appears to be basically little more than a multilateral pact for collective security. It falls short of the rumored Soviet plan for a "Council of Europe" which, among other things, would have had the task of supervising the unification of Germany. Molotov did not clarify the role that would be played by the conferences and committees to be set up under the pact. If these were developed into a functioning organization in which all European countries were joined, the Kremlin would run a greater risk of satellite disloyalty. It is possible that the Kremlin would consider the chance of gaining a stronger voice in Europe worth this satellite risk. It is more likely that the Soviet leaders assume that their plan will not even be accepted, because of their demand that as prerequisites NATO and EDC be dissolved and the United States be excluded from Europe.

The other new Molotov proposal at the 10 February meeting calls for withdrawal of occupation troops from Germany within six months. For the first time Molotov has set a definite time for this withdrawal and proposed it apparently independent of his unacceptable plan for a provisional government and elections. Soviet security now would be assured not only by the maintenance of "limited contingents" but by reserving the right to return the troops to Germany if that security is threatened.

State Dept. review completed

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East Germans polled on conference issues: The American Hicog evaluation staff in Germany conducted a poll on 4-8 February among about 400 East Germans and East Berliners who were visiting West Berlin. The results should be interpreted with caution, particularly because of the unrepresentative sample of East Germans likely to be found in West Berlin.

In this poll, 86 per cent favored the Eden plan and only 2 per cent favored the Molotov plan for Germany. Although 48 per cent would accept the Molotov prohibition of German alliances, only 10 per cent would accept the Oder-Neisse line. Furthermore, 95 per cent preferred four-power or neutral supervision of elections to all-German control. Only 11 per cent of the East Germans believed that the Molotov plebiscite plan was meant seriously and only 8 per cent said they would vote for the Molotov treaty in such a plebiscite.

Opinions expressed on these issues are very similar to those of West Germans.

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